



Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5791st meeting

Thursday, 6 December 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Spatafora	(Italy)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mrs. Itoua Apoyolo
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. T. Al-Ansari
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . .	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott

Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by the head of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste

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07-62902 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Briefing by the head of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Santos (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, the Permanent Representative of South Africa and head of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste.

I would like first of all to welcome the return of the members of the Council and of the Secretariat who took part in the mission to Timor-Leste.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Dumisani Kumalo, head of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): South Africa was honoured to lead the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste, comprising six delegations, namely, China, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa and the United States of America. The mission left New York on 24 November and returned on 1 December 2007.

The purpose of the visit was to encourage the Government, the parliament, the political parties and

the people of Timor-Leste to continue to work together, engage in political dialogue and consolidate peace, democracy and the rule of law, security sector reform, sustainable social and economic development and national reconciliation in their country. It also sought to discuss and exchange views with the Timorese authorities on ways and means to assist the country in developing the capacities necessary to build on security and democratic and other gains achieved thus far and to express the Security Council's full support for the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) in the country and the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste, and to assess the progress made on the ground relating to the implementation of UNMIT's mandate.

During its visit to Timor-Leste, the mission met with various interlocutors in Government, including the President, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, members of the judiciary, the national parliament and political parties, including the leader of the main opposition party. The mission also held interactions with non-governmental organizations and representatives of women's, youth and church groups, as well as representatives of UNMIT and other United Nations agencies on the ground. The mission also received a briefing from the International Stabilisation Force led by Australia and New Zealand.

On 28 November, at the invitation of the Government, the mission participated in the national day celebrations of Timor-Leste's independence

Meanwhile, the mission conducted field visits in the districts of Liquiçá and Baucau outside Dili, in order to listen to the views and concerns of the people on the ground. In Baucau, members of the mission visited a United Nations-sponsored school, where the World Food Programme and UNICEF are involved in feeding the children. The mission also visited a camp for internally displaced persons near Dili hospital to hear of the challenges faced by the people in the camps.

The general political situation in Timor-Leste remains calm and stable, but fragile. Following the successful conclusion of presidential and parliamentary elections held in May and June this year, respectively, the new Government has recently completed its first 100 days in office and new ministers and office bearers started with their work. The mission noted that while there are high expectations among the Timorese

people, the new Government is also grappling with establishing its policies and institutions. One of the issues the Government was grappling with during our visit was the national budget.

All the interlocutors that the mission met indicated that Timor-Leste is experiencing stability and peace. However, there is a collective view that the issues of the IDPs, the so-called "petitioners" who are former soldiers who deserted the army and the unresolved case of Major Alfredo Reinado, who also left the army, cause uncertainty and divisions among the people and leadership of Timor-Leste.

In its meetings with interlocutors, the mission emphasized the need for political dialogue, reconciliation and political engagement among the country's leadership. The mission observed that at the core of those concerns there seem to be continuing differences regarding the country's political direction between the ruling Alliance for Parliamentary Majority (AMP) led by Prime Minister Gusmão, and the main opposition party, FRETILIN, led by former Prime Minister Alkatiri. Most of the mission interlocutors argued that those differences concern the constitutionality and legitimacy of the current Government and its ability to govern. The good news, however, was that despite the political differences among the parties, all 15 political parties, including FRETILIN, were working together in parliament and elsewhere, trying to address the challenges facing their country.

The mission also recognized that the challenges of governance and the legacy of the violent crisis of 2006 and its aftermath continue to haunt the country's political leadership and to affect the people of Timor-Leste. Related to these are the unresolved issues of petitioners, the fate of 100,000 IDPs currently settled in about 53 camps and the humanitarian and socio-economic challenges that the country continues to face.

With regard to the capacity of State institutions, the mission noted that Timor-Leste faces challenges associated with weak institutions, lack of capacity and difficulties in areas of governance.

The mission highlighted the need for collective responsibility among Timorese people and their leaders to find solutions to their challenges. In the short term, it is crucial that the Government of Timor-Leste, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, work together to improve the living

conditions of the IDPs. In this regard, the mission repeatedly emphasized the need for Timorese ownership of their fate and the need to engage in political dialogue and reconciliation and continuous engagement in addressing those challenges. There was no doubt that the challenges that face Timor-Leste could be best addressed by all Timorese people. Despite the challenges facing the country, the mission was encouraged by the well-functioning democracy in Timor-Leste.

On the matters of reform of the security sector, the mission and its Timorese interlocutors agreed that both the security and justice sectors were in need of strengthening. In this context, the mission recognized from its interactions with its interlocutors that the 2006 crisis was a result of challenges within the two security institutions, namely the national police — the PNTL — and national defence — the F-FDTL. The mission stressed the urgent need for reform of those institutions and the importance of a Government strategy to address this issue.

In the meantime, the mission noted that despite acknowledging the important role the United Nations and the international security forces are playing in their country, some interlocutors expected those international institutions to respect local culture and institutions as well as to provide the space for Timorese ownership of some operational activities. The missions also expressed its hope that the role of the United Nations police will be reviewed to ensure maximum results. In this context, the mission recognized the need to send a team of experts from the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations to assess the situation and ways and means to improve it.

Regarding the role of UNMIT, all of the mission's interlocutors emphasized the importance of the continued presence of the UNMIT and the United Nations in Timor-Leste. Everyone we met called for the UNMIT presence in the country to be continued. The mission stressed to all its interlocutors the importance of utilizing the United Nations presence to achieve self-reliance and self-sustenance. The mission commended UNMIT for its continuous work in Timor-Leste and recalled that it was the Security Council that would consider the extension of UNMIT's mandate when it expires on 28 February 2008.

Lastly, it is worth noting that following the 2006 violent crisis, the country has recovered very well and, with the support of the international community, even managed to organize, prepare and hold free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections earlier this year. Despite the challenges associated with the results of the parliamentary elections, a new Government is in place, political parties are represented in parliament and civil society seems to be flourishing.

On the other hand, the country faces enormous challenges associated with the political differences among leaders in resolving critical issues facing the country, such as socio-economic difficulties associated with widespread unemployment and poverty. In the humanitarian sphere, the plight of the IDPs remains a big task facing the people and Government of Timor-Leste.

Despite those challenges, the mission left Timor-Leste convinced that the country is on the right path to regaining its role as a peaceful, stable, united and prosperous country.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the representatives of China, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and the United States of America for their unwavering support and patience during the mission.

On behalf of my colleagues who participated in the mission, I would like to thank the Government and people of Timor-Leste for their hospitality, assistance and cooperation, as well as the entire staff of UNMIT for providing us the necessary support during the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste. We particularly wish to note the invaluable support from the Government of Indonesia in assisting the delegation with smooth transit to Timor-Leste.

Finally, I cannot end without thanking our support team of Ms. Norma Chan, Ms. Signe Jepsen, Ms. Vijayalakshmi Menon, Ms. Paula Gonçalves and Mr. Troels Erichsen, all of the Security Council Secretariat Branch and the United Nations security personnel respectively, for their tireless efforts and support during the preparatory stage and also during the mission. We thank them for their professional and tireless efforts.

The President: I thank Ambassador Kumalo for his very interesting and very crisp briefing. I think that the political substance of what he has told us, as well

as what we have read in the press about how he was received and the importance that the Timorese gave to the mission, confirms how appropriate and wise was the decision of the Council to send the mission to Timor-Leste. I think it is also a lesson learned for the future, when we will consider how to plan that sort of mission. It will not be in a 15-member composition, but I am convinced — of course, I am talking in my national capacity — that more and more such missions, which show the flag of the United Nations and that the United Nations is near the countries involved, are needed.

On behalf of all the Council, I should like to express gratitude and very strong appreciation to all of the members of the Security Council mission, so ably led by Ambassador Kumalo, for the manner in which they discharged their important responsibility on behalf of the Council. I would also like to join my voice to Ambassador Kumalo's in thanking the Secretariat for all the invaluable assistance it has provided for the success of the mission.

I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Santos (Timor-Leste): I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December and to pledge to you my delegation's fullest support. I would further like to express our delegation's appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Natalegawa, for the effective and excellent manner in which he and his team conducted the deliberations and the work of the Council during the month of November.

Through you, Sir, allow me to express, on behalf of my President, the Government of Timor-Leste and the people of Timor-Leste, our most profound gratitude for honouring us with the recent visit of the Security Council to the country, led by Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa.

We are particularly grateful to the Council members who visited our nascent democracy for enduring long travel hours and for having given their precious time to travel all the way to one of the most distant places from the vibrant city of New York.

Albeit considerable progress has been made since the crisis in April 2006, the fact remains that the challenges facing Timor-Leste are enormous, and

therefore, although the atmosphere of general improvement of peace and security is welcome, it should not be replaced by complacency or another premature celebration. I wish to assure the Council that the President of the Republic, the people and the Government of Timor-Leste are doing our best and all that we can to consolidate peace and stability in order, first, to free our people from poverty and, secondly but no less importantly, to absolve the United Nations of its responsibilities in that regard.

In his speech to the General Assembly during the general debate of the sixty-second session, the President of the Republic, Mr. Ramos-Horta, recognized that the international community faces a number of critical situations around the world that are more serious and with much greater strategic importance and implications for regional and world peace and security than the situation in Timor-Leste.

Timor-Leste does not want to create a culture of dependency. We have been dependent on others for too long. In fact, we never struggled to be dependent, but

to be sustainable and independent. This period is one in which we need to be interdependent on our friends in the international community through the key multilateral mechanisms of the United Nations, and we require continued support to assist us in the consolidation of our goal. Therefore, I can state that continued United Nations engagement is important to further stabilize the situation, strengthen our national institutions and consolidate peace and democracy.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our most sincere gratitude to the Security Council for honouring us with its visit, and I would like to thank the team members, notably members of the Secretariat, who accompanied the mission to Timor-Leste and helped pave the way for a successful visit.

The President: The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.